

RECKLESS RALPH'S DIME NOVEL ROUNDUP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers. Published by Ralph F. Cummings, Box 75, Fisherville, Mass., U. S. A. Price \$1.00 per year or ten cents a copy.

VOL. 6

JUNE, 1937

NO. 63

THE FIRST DIAMOND DICK STORY By W. C. Miller

On April 8th, 1878, in the "New York Weekly" appeared the first installment of the first Diamond Dick Story. The title in Box Car letters was — "Diamond Dick, or the Sarpint of Siskiyou" — A Romance of Arizona by Delta Calavaras. The second installment had for title, simply, the "Sarpint of Siskiyou" or "Diamond Dick." The story ran through seven numbers of The Weekly. This was only a few months after the first "Deadwood Dick" story was published by Beadles, so the two Dicks started almost even.

The second Diamond Dick story to appear was "Silver Mark," or the "Sarpint of Siskiyou." By Delta Calavaras, also in New York Weekly and about the same length as the first story, but in "Silver Mask" the "Sarpint" (Handsome Harry) is the whole show. Diamond Dick appears but dimly, if at all, Incog. as "Del Norte" — the author seemed to favor "The Sarpint" as leading man in these first two stories.

In 1889 Street & Smith reprinted the two stories in the "Log Cabin Library." The first story appeared as No. 14 Log Cabin Library with the title "Diamond Dick in Arizona"—By Delta Calavaras. The second story as No. 17 Log Cabin Library—with original title, "Silver Mask, or the Sarpint of Siskiyou." "Silver Mask" was reprinted again in the Log Cabin Library No. 376 with the title changed to "Danite Dick, and his White Mountain Wolves, or the Octogan of Arizona," by W. B. Lawson, but it is the same old "Silver Mask" story.

The two stories were only issued in the first Edition of "Log Cabin." Then they were switched to "Nugget Library" and two new stories filled the gap in "Log Cabin" as Nos. 14 and 17.

Between 1878 and 1890 the same author wrote twenty-five Diamond Dick stories, issued in irregular intervals.

These were only half the length of the first two original stories — the first title was "Dashing Diamond Dick" by W. B. Lawson, the twenty-fifth was "Diamond Dick's Discard." Then followed seven "Diamond Dick, Jr.", and there the author stopped. No more appeared for two years and four months. But beginning June 30th, 1894, the old stories in the order named were all reprinted in Street & Smith "New York Five Cent Library" with the exception of the two first long stories. After the reprints—the "Junior" tales were carried on by T. W. Henshaw, Thomas C. Harbough and others until 1900.

Some twelve years ago a New York newspaper announced that the original author of "Diamond Dick" was still living in New York, the name was given as Robert Russell. He used several Pen Names and was the first to use "W. B. Lawson," which later was used by many of the "Dime" authors. He wrote many good stories for the New York Weekly. Among others, are: "Big Foot's Band," "Buffalo Bill at Wounded Knee," "The Shanghier of Greenwich Street" and "Buffalo Bill, the Border King."

In the first Diamond Dick story of 1878, the age of the hero is given as Twenty-five, the year of the story is 1860. His son, Bertie, first appears in the third story at the age of eight, and "Handsome Harry" stays with them from start to finish.

The stories continued long after 1900, but all that was left of that glittering figure of 1878 was the name. Many writers tried to keep the series going as late as 1912, but as "Diamond Dick" would be about 70 years of age, "and Handsome Harry" near 80, it was time to ring down the curtain.

IN PRAISE OF THE HALF-DIME NOVEL

Editor New York Times Magazine:
In The Times Magazine I note with

a feeling of real emotion some frontispieces from the old Beadle Half-Dime Library. What memories come back as I scan these immortal engravings! Of a day when it was my proud boast that I had read every one of the Deadwood Dick novels, by Edward L. Wheeler.

But I write this not to dilate on that but to correct, forever, if it be possible, the misconception involved in classing such writings with so-called dime novels. Between the stories included in Beadle's Half-Dime Library, as well as others of the same order published by Frank Tousey in his Wide Awake Library, and the actual dime novel, there was the broadest kind of distinction.

The dime novel, rarely read by boys, was a rather poor attempt to imitate more serious writing, but with bizarre characters drawn from the West or from detective annals. The dime novel, for this reason, was not pure literature but only imitative.

Not so the smoother, truly drawn pictures in the nickel type Beadle's Half-Dime Novel and Tousey's Wide Awake Library. These sparkled with action, feeling; amazing thumbnail descriptions of great scenes. It is well that this literature is at last being garnered. It defines a period within itself, and a period that marked a generation now still in prime, even if weighted with years. Here was a field in which analysis took no part. Action, action and action!

Edward L. Wheeler, as I recall, wrote only one dime novel. It gratifies me to say it was a failure. The great characters in the Deadwood Dick stories are that gentleman himself, Calamity Jane, Old Avalanche and a frolicsome goat.

JAMES N. WOOD.

Lowell, Mass., Jan. 5, 1931.

(Courtesy of N. Y. Times Magazine and James N. Wood.)

CHARLES BRAGIN

1525 West 12th St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

FIFTY DOLLARS CASH will be paid for correct list of replies to question below, divided equally among the winners, who must answer ALL the questions correctly. No prize will be given for partially correct answers. Contest closes July 1, 1937. Correct answers with names of winners (if any) will appear shortly afterwards.

1. In what Tousey publications did

Old King Brady appear? (Omit story papers.)

2. What was the full title of the first Frank Reade story, in what publication did it appear, who was the publisher?

3. Who first pitched the "double" curve, in what publication did the stories appear, who was the author? What was the author's real name?

4. Who published Golden Hours?

5. Name two authors still living who wrote for the Tousey publications.

6. In what Tousey publication did the "Unknown" appear with his saying "Ye Gods and little fishes"?

7. Give complete titles of No. 17 Ivers Deadwood Dick Library.

8. Give list of all editions (where published, etc.) of the story Muldoon Abroad.

9. List all publications in which Tousey James Boys stories appeared.

10. What famous living author wrote Spanish-American War stories for Street & Smith?

Send all replies to Charles Bragin, 1525 West 12th St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

To those not winning any cash prize—consolation prize of novels will be given to the three contestants sending in the highest percentage of correct answers.

NOVEL NEWS

The leading Hobby Magazine of the country is reprinting that famous tale, Muldoon the Solid Man, which is being enthusiastically received by readers.

That \$50.00 contest in this issue should get the boys all hot and bothered. If you don't win any of the cash with a perfect list of replies, you can still get some nice prize, in novels, for a high rating in the contest.

We note a constant increase in advertising by leading book stores, for dime novels. As they advertise only when they NEED the material for their customers, this means a healthy development of the hobby.

Strangely enough, Tip Top Weekly leads in demand, and we foresee a great increase in the value of this publication as a result. As high as \$8.00 has been paid for a single copy.

Boys, take advantage of the free "swap column"—you can get what you want, for what you don't!

That deservedly popular collector, Ross Crauford, has taken a life partner, and all the boys wish them both

the utmost in happiness.

Fred Singleton, the Master Printer, is now on his way to sunny Florida, where he will establish his own private press, to turn out some of his fine work — and we look forward to something worthwhile in "dime novel" propaganda.

It is expected that the dime novel collection at the Huntington Museum will soon be catalogued. The frail condition of the items has delayed this work for years.

A well known dime novel authority states that eventually all dime novel collections will go into universities, museums, etc. One large Western university is now negotiating the purchase of a large collection held by a popular collector in that territory.

That set of Tip Tops, which sold for \$1,700.00 year or so ago, has been passed along to another collector, via the "swap" route. Probably the biggest trade in dime novel history.

Boys, send in your "news" for printing in this column.

NEWS OF THE MONTH

We have a fine contest running this month, and here's hopin' every one will take a crack at it, here's luck to the winners.

Leonard C. Leighter of Brockton, Mass., wants to know if Dr. Frank O'Brien who left his novels to the New York Public Library, is the same man who wrote books about the South Sea Islands, one of the books being "White Shadows of the South Sea." Who can answer this Q. for Leo?

C. H. Blake of Dallas, Texas, is very much interested in procuring certain copies of Fireside Companion for his collection. What have you???

Charlie Austin has dug up another "gold mine," in old timers, whoopee? Beadles Dimes, Half Dimes, New Dimes, Yellows, Pockets and what not. Who says he isn't lucky?

Don Brewer of Stroudsburg, Pa., says he likes anything historical or Western. Wall St., and Sport Stories not wanted. He sure likes his "Mystery" stories, too.

Deadwood Dick, Jr., will be back for "head line news," as a fellow says, in the next issue with a fine article on "Dime Novel Collecting." As Dickie says, "A Hobby to Fit Every Pocket-book."

Everybody says the May Roundup is a Winner. Let's hope they're right.

Frisco Bert Couch of San Francisco

is leaving here with his heroine (the Mrs.), 8:10 A.M., May 6, 1937, en route to Vancouver, via Greyhound busses, sleeping in town where the bus hits at night, incurring good rest and full sight of the geography involved. Will reach and sleep in Dunsmuir, Calif., first night; second night in Eugene, Oregon; third and fourth nights in Portland, Oregon, where we will see millions of salmon coming in from the ocean to spawn; fifth night in Seattle, sixth night in Victoria, British Columbia, seventh and eighth nights in Vancouver; ninth night in Seattle (will be on British soil when the British King is crowned and participate in their celebration); tenth and eleventh nights in Ranier National Park in Paradise Valley; twelfth night in Tacoma, Washington; thirteenth and fourteenth nights in Portland again; fifteenth night in Marshfield, Oregon; sixteenth night in Eureka, California; seventeenth night in Frisco with six additional days that I can scatter along anywhere on the line that pleases us to stop over an extra day or two. If I do not use those extra days on the Vancouver trip we will use them to visit the Yosemite National Park on May 29, 30, 31.

EXCHANGE COLUMN

Swappers: Please send in your FREE SWAP AD of 20 words right away for next issue.

FOR MEMBERS AND SUBSCRIBERS ONLY

Wants old catalogues on the old time Beadles Dime and Half Dime Novels, What do you want? I have Stamps, Old Coins, and What-not? A. J. Kigas, 258 Milbury St., Worcester, Mass.

I offer N. Y. Detective Libraries for these "Old Cap Collier's"—85, 269, 296, 328, 549, 250, 16, 242 and others. Geo. French, 121 W. Passaic Ave., Bloomfield, N. J.

Wanted—Early Americana and Historical items. What do you want? Kowalczyk Bros., 91 Ward St., Worcester, Mass.

Wanted—No. 119 of The Merriwell Series. What do you want? D. S. Learnard, 56 Green St., Melrose, Mass.

Pluck & Lucks, Family Story Pap-

ers, etc., to trade for other novels. Charles Woodward, South Ashburnham, Mass.

For Exchange—Black & White Novels, also colored covers, to trade for same or similar kinds. Wm. M. Burns, 15 Cottage St., Rockland, Me.

Wanted — Frank Merriwell's School Days, in a good cloth binding; also want Three Chums in China, Leone Locke, The Two on Galley Island, and Stickney's Third Reader (issued before 1903.) Wm. B. McCafferty, 1212 Denver Ave., Fort Worth, Tex.

Good News, Happy Days, Golden Days, English Novels to exchange for Tip Tops or stamps. M. E. Marsh, 812 N. Cayuga St., Ithaca, N. Y.

WANTED

A good copy of Secret Service No. 726, also old Novel Catalogues. Leonard C. Leighter, 89 Perkins St., Brockton, Mass.

Wanted To Buy or Will Exchange For Beadles Dime No. 83, or Capt. Holmes Novels (eadles.) Chas. A. Welton, Austin Road, Waterbury, Conn.

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